

International Symposium on Legality Verified Wood 2010
Part Two Report: Activities in Japan to Tackle Illegal Logging Issues

Presenter Information

Name	Yasuhiro Ohashi
Affiliation	Japan Lumber Importers' Association (JLIA)
Title	Executive Director
Career Summary	<p>1970: Entered Sumitomo Corporation, Timber Department, Southsea Timber Section (based in Tokyo; primarily engaged in the import and sales of southsea wood [logs, lumber and plywood] through postings to the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia).</p> <p>2000: Seconded to Sumisho Kenzai (the present Sumisho & Mitsuibussan Kenzai Co., Ltd.)</p> <p>2004: Retired from Sumitomo Corporation and was appointed JLIA Executive Director. Presently also serving as a member of the Council for Tackling Illegal Logging and Promotion of Goho-wood [legal wood]</p>

Report Outline

Title: Import and Supply of Legality Verified Wood: Current Conditions and Issues
<p>For 34 years after entering Sumitomo Corporation (Timber Department) in 1970, I was primarily engaged in the import and sales of southsea timber (logs, lumber and plywood), with postings in Davao, Kota Kinabalu, Sibul and Jakarta. I have served in my present post since 2004. The Japan Lumber Importers' Association (JLIA) operates with membership fees from our members, who handle timber and building materials, and our main work is to provide information to our members. We also exchange information and opinions with the Japanese government (the Forestry Agency) and with domestic and foreign industry associations as a representative of Japan's main timber importers. I have participated in efforts to establish a supply system for legality verified wood right from the start as a member of the commission for tackling illegal logging.</p> <p>JLIA members import about 60% of the major timber items imported into Japan. Almost all JLIA members have become JLIA authorized goho-wood suppliers in accordance with the Forestry Agency guidelines to establish a supply system for goho-wood. Goho-wood is wood granted legality certificates individually for specific shipments based on the Forestry Agency guidelines.</p> <p>In carrying out the prerequisite training and monitoring of members, it became clear to JLIA that while there is strong demand for legality certified wood from manufacturers using logs as raw materials, demand from the wholesalers and distributors who purchase those products is still weak, with ample room for growth. We also found that</p>

the certification demand for tropical timber is greater than that for timber from conifers.

Amid the stagnant demand for legality certified wood from domestic distributors, for the time being many JLIA members are issuing legality certificates to those purchasers who demand them on a priority basis. Meanwhile, JLIA members are requesting exporters to provide legality certificates because the demand for certificates is expected to increase in the future and because they need to be able to respond if certificates are requested after sales are completed. However, while some exporters voluntarily issue legality certificates, other exporters are reported to be reluctant to meet the buyers' requests.

As written in the Forestry Agency Guidelines, the first methods of verifying legality are the forest certification system and the chain of custody (CoC) certification system. The second method is to become JLIA certified. JLIA members are already certified through this second method, but they also work to gain CoC certification to be certified under the first method as well. The majority of JLIA members have already gained FSC and/or PEFC-CoC certification, and the number of such certifications has been rising over the past few years in particular. In fact, JLIA members who have obtained CoC certification account for 80-90% of the total volume of wood imports by JLIA members, so at JLIA a forest certified wood supply system is being established.

Japan's Long-Life Quality Housing Law and the Act for Promotion of Use of Wood in Public Buildings call for the use of legality verified wood, and the private sector is also taking measures to shift to eco panels, green lumber and other sustainable materials. Amid this trend, JLIA reconfirmed its commitment to the positive procurement and domestic supply of legality verified wood at our annual general meeting. In the sense that the legality certifications are linked, the verification method used by JLIA authorized suppliers has the same effect as the verification method used in the forest certification system and the CoC certification system. To ensure the reliability of the system, all JLIA authorized suppliers need to accurately understand the verification system and make proper use of it. For that reason, JLIA seeks to educate members by visiting every member once every eighteen months and offering training for managers as well as persons in charge. At the same time, JLIA also evaluates JLIA authorized suppliers' measures through monitoring. In these ways, we seek to maintain and improve the reliability of the system. As a result, a trend has arisen among JLIA members to shift to a proactive policy of domestic sales of imported legality verified wood specifically as legality verified wood, rather than waiting for a spike in the demand for legality verified wood.

To boost the effectiveness of these Japanese efforts, however, it is critical that exporters understand Japan's approach and supply legality verified wood. Fortunately, some

exporting countries have their own public CoC systems, and I understand that many of the main exporting countries are managing forests on a sustainable basis so we expect that legality is verified by forest **certification and** CoC certification under a third-party certification system. With CoC certification, simply stipulating that a shipment is CoC certified wood and writing the certification number on the shipping documents make the documents into a legality certificate. Sometimes only a copy of the CoC certificate is submitted, but that is not enough, because a legality certificate (completed shipping documents) is required for each shipment under the Forestry Agency guidelines. We sincerely hope that exporting countries will actively issue legality certificates and cooperate with our efforts in Japan to take the lead in spreading the use of legality verified wood.